

BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY MARCH 27, 2012

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00pm by Budget Committee Chairperson Mr. Vadenais.

ROLL CALL 7:00pm: Present were Mrs. Bartomioli, Mrs. Nadeau, Mr. Puccetti, Mr. Vadenais, Ms. Vallee

THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET WITH THE BUDGET COMMITTEE WAS CONDUCTED WITH THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION:

Mr. Vadenais read through the Budget Sections:

Town Council; Probate Court; Town Solicitor;

Q: Is there enough money in the budget to litigate the Rankin Path issue?

A Mr. Vadenais: Yes

Municipal Court; Town Administrator; Town Clerk; Town Planner; Board of Canvassers; Finance Department; Tax Assessor; Tax Collector; Audits/Computer Services; Zoning; Personnel; Conservation; Historic District; Housing; Economic Development;

**Public Safety; Budget Committee; Juvenile Hearing Board; Town Hall;
Plant Operations;**

Q: Do the plant operations figures include the new joint computerized systems?

A Mr. Vadenais: All facilities except Kendall Dean are included.

Comment Mr. Ericson: If we don't have a savings the town will be reimbursed.

Printing & Advertising; Contingency Fund; Scouters Hall; Library;

Q: Why is the library Budget level funded with no increase?

A Ms. Peirce: That is the amount we asked for and we are able to operate with those funds.

Police Department;

Q: How have all the calls to Walmart impacted the Department?

A Chief Reynolds: Since 9-1-11 the town has had 370 service calls-130 of those calls were to Walmart; 420 arrests-50 of those arrests were at Walmart; 741 incidents-25 of those incidents were at Walmart. Chief Reynolds stated that Walmart is not impacting station duty because the new Fire Code mandates that someone is always present at the station.

Animal Control; EMA; Fire Department; Hydrant Rental;

Q: Why does the town pay for fire hydrant rentals-shouldn't the water users where there are hydrants pay the rentals?

A Mr. Vadenais: The town rents the hydrants because they are for use by our Fire Department.

Inspection Division; DPW Administration; Highway Department;

Q: Why is there no money in the budget for road resurfacing?

A Mr. Vadenais: There is \$540,000 in the Capital Budget section for improvements over a 5 year period beginning in 2013.

Parks & Recreation; Tree Warden;

Q: Will the town do away with the use of outside services now that we have a bucket truck?

A Mr. Vadenais: Town employees are not permitted to go within so many feet of power lines so the town will always need to employ professionals for some of the work.

Streetlights; Rubbish Disposal; Sealer of Weights; Debt Service; Employee Benefits; Insurance; School Department; Grants & Contributions;

Q Ms. Peirce: Where are the Finance Director and Town Administrator?

A Mr. Vadenais: By Town Charter they should be here.

Comment Mr. Ericson: Towns in MA are working hard to share responsibilities throughout departments in order to cut costs. Mr. Ericson believes that consolidation of services is the way of the future.

Comment Mr. Vadenais: The Budget Committee has been pushing for collaboration of expenses including Payroll Services and we are still waiting for answers. The Budget Committee is trying to do away with “turf wars”.

Comment Mr. Alter: I want to note that 85% of the School Department Budget is salaries and benefits whereas only 35% of the Municipal Budget is salaries and benefits.

Comment Ms. Johannes: The School Committee is making progress with regard to some of the collaborative issues and will submit a report to the Budget Committee.

Comment Mr. Vadenais: The consolidation effort still seems fragmented and not everyone is fully cooperating.

There was discussion about combining the Finance Director position for both the School Department and the Municipal side. Several people commented that the job would be more than one person could handle.

Mr. Vadenais stated that the Budget Committee hopes to present its final budget recommendations to the Town Council on 4-16-12.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm was made by Mr. Puccetti, seconded by Ms.Nadeau and unanimously approved.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Merrie Nadeau